

STATEMENT OF ~~GEORGE BUSH~~
CONFIRMATION HEARINGS ON HIS NOMINATION TO BE
DIRECTOR OF THE CIA

December 15, 1975 -- Senate Armed Services Committee

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee:

I am pleased to be back in the United States. I am still on Peking standard time; so if I seem a little tired I hope you will forgive me.

My nomination was sent to this committee sometime ago, but I was unable to leave China prior to the President's visit.

The President left Peking December 5th and we left December 7th.

I recognize that I am being nominated as director of the CIA at a very complicated time in the history of this agency and indeed in the history of our country. In fact, having been in China for a year, I didn't fully realize the depth of the emotions surrounding the CIA controversy.

Be that as it may I have a few fundamental views that I would like to set out in the brief statement.

First, my views on intelligence. I believe in a strong intelligency capability for the USA. My more than three years

in two vital foreign affairs posts, plus my attending Cabinet meetings for four years, plus my four years in Congress, make me totally convinced that we must see our intelligence capability strengthened. We must not see the CIA dismantled.

Reporting and investigative work by the Senate and the House have brought to light some abuses that have taken place over a long period of time. Clearly things were done that were outrageous and morally offensive. These must not be repeated and I will take every step possible to see that they are not.

I understand that Director Colby has already issued directives that implement some of the decisions of the Rockefeller Commission decisions designed to safeguard against abuses. If confirmed, I will do all in my power to keep informed, to demand the highest ethical standards from those with whom I work and particularly to see that this agency stays in foreign, I repeat foreign, intelligence business.

I am told that morale at the CIA and indeed in other parts of the intelligence community is low. This must change and I'll do my best to ^{help} change it. Some people today are driven to wantonly disclose sensitive information -- not to the proper oversight authorities of the Congress but to friend and foe alike around the

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world. In many instances this type of disclosure can wipe out effective operations, can endanger the lives of patriotic Americans and can cause enormous damage to our own security.

I view the job of Director of Central Intelligence not as a maker of foreign policy; but as one who should forcefully and objectively present to the President and to the National Security Council the findings and views of the intelligence community.

It is essential that the recommendations be without political tilt.

It is essential that strongly held differences within the intelligence community be presented.

It is essential that without regard to existing policy or future policy, the intelligence estimates be presented -- cold, hard, truthful.

I am convinced that I have the proper access to the President that was strongly emphasized in the recent Robert D. Murphy Commission Report.

I hope you find I have the proper integrity and character to see the job will faithfully be done.

Further I see the running of the CIA as very important, but I see the responsibility for coordinating all of our foreign

intelligence activities as even more important. The CIA has a fundamental input into intelligence estimates, but so must the other agencies.

I will be fair to all, but I will do my level best to eliminate unnecessary duplication of effort and minimize interagency bureaucratic disputes. It won't be easy, I am told, but I will try hard on this.

Second, my personal qualifications:

I am familiar with the charges that I am too political for this job. Here is my side:

Yes, I have been in politics. I served four years in Congress. I served 2 years as Chairman of my party. I have no apology for either service, indeed I am proud to have served.

Some of the difficulties the CIA has encountered might have been avoided if more political judgment had been brought to bear. I am not talking about narrow political partisanship, I am talking about the respect for the people and their sensitivities that most politicians understand.

I do not view political experience as a detriment. I view it as an asset; but I also recognize the need to leave politics behind the minute I take on the new job if confirmed.

I would like to add:

If confirmed I will take no part, directly or indirectly, in any partisan political activity of any kind.

I will not attend any political meetings.

I will give no political speeches nor make any political contributions.

My ability to shut politics off when serving in non partisan jobs has been demonstrated in two high and sensitive foreign affairs posts -- as the committee can verify.

For two years I was Ambassador at the United Nations, and for a little over a year I served in China as Chief of the U.S. Liaison Office. Both jobs taught me a lot about the product of our intelligence community -- both taught me the fundamental importance of retaining an intelligence community second to none.

Frankly, many of our friends around the world and some who are not so friendly are wondering what we are doing to ourselves as a nation as they see the attacks on the CIA. Some must wonder if they can depend on us to protect them if they cooperate with us on important intelligence projects.

I think many admire our ability to cleanse ourselves and admit mistakes; but in something as sensitive as intelligence they frankly hope we don't go so far that we will kill off an important asset that

They themselves and the free world vitally need for their own security.

In addition to my foreign affairs assignments I attended Cabinet meetings from 1971-1974. Those four years gave me a good insight into some of the foreign policy considerations facing our country.

I think this foreign affairs background will be extremely useful in my new job.

I also feel the administrative experience I had in starting and running a business enterprise, which prospered, will be helpful.

Lastly, I will address myself to a question that is on the minds of some members of this committee. Namely, the question of my having been considered in the past for the Vice Presidency.

When Secretary Rumsfeld was before this committee not so long ago, his name having been speculated on for Vice President, he said "it is presumptuous of me to stand up and take myself out of consideration for something I am not in consideration for".

The committee accepted this answer then and I offer it now.

Let me add just one thing more:

If some individual or group comes forward promoting me for Vice President when I am Director of CIA I will instruct them to cease such activity.

But there is one other question, namely; "even if you have not lifted a finger to seek the nomination and even if you have actively discouraged others from advocating you for office, and the nomination is then offered to you - will you then accept?

I cannot in all honesty tell you that I would not accept.

I don't think any American should be asked to say he would not accept.

To my knowledge noone in the history of this Republic has ever been asked to renounce his political birthright as the price of confirmation for any office.

I can tell you that I will not seek any office while I hold the job as CIA Director. I will put politics totally out of my sphere of activities.

In this new job I serve at the pleasure of the President. I plan to stay as long as he wants me there.

Some of my friends have asked me "Why do you accept this job with all its controversy and with its obvious barriers to political future?" My answer is simple.

First, the work is desperately important to the survival of this country and to the survival of freedom around the world.

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Second, old fashioned as it may sound, it is my duty to serve my country. I did not seek this job, but I want to do it and I will do my very best.